7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1

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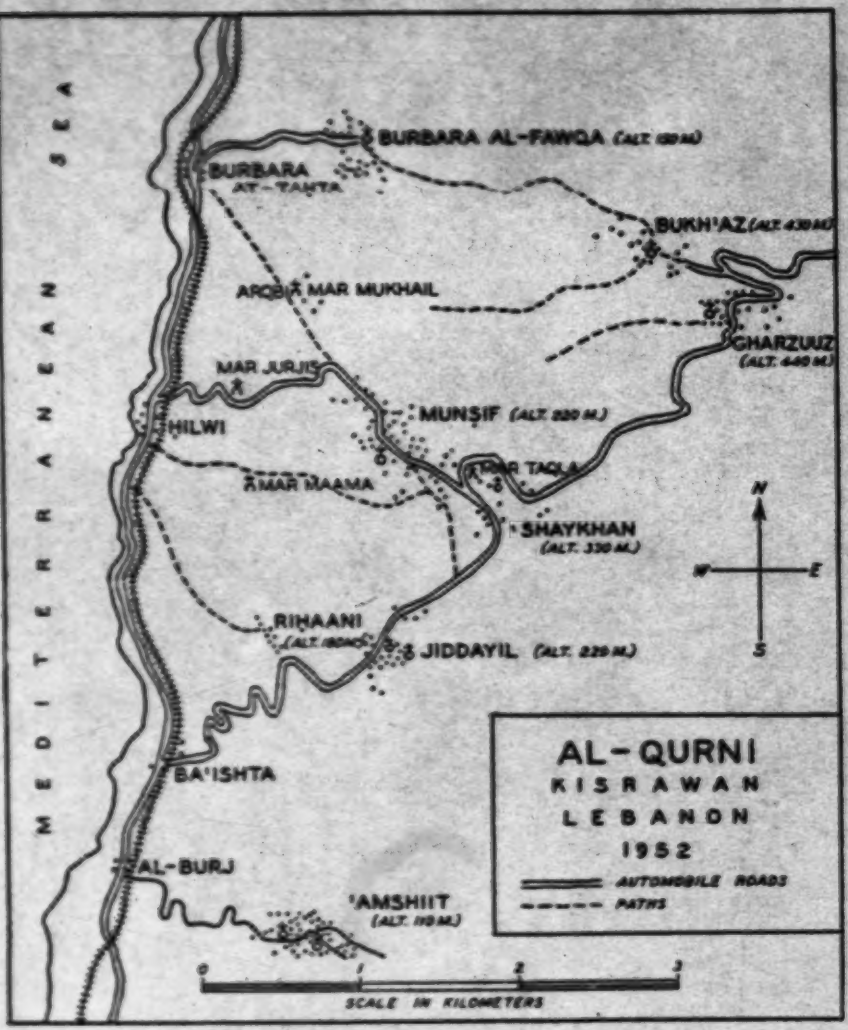

FIG. 2. AL-QURNI

312 only one yields potable water—hence the name of the hamlet, which means "sweet."

137 The sparse natural flora of al-Qurni is an excellent example of garrigue which is widely distributed around the Mediterranean in districts which feature thin soils and calcareous outcrops. Comparing garrigue to the relatively more lush vegetation typical of the French Provence, Fisher says:

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Munṣif is by far the largest, being at least twice as large as Jiddayil which is the second in size.

Al-Qurnı̄ is a unit because its inhabitants consider it to be one. Within it, the individual villages regard themselves as independent, and the people even recognize minor cultural differences. For example, it was said that the phoneme *as* is pronounced slightly differently in Burbara, Munṣif, and Jiddayil; that the people of one of the villages always marry people from the other villages rather than their own; that the women of one of the villages are more quarrelsome than those of another; and so on. Yet, in relation to the outside, al-Qurnı̄ is a unit. Why? It is not because of sheer proximity, although of course this helps. The reason is that, with minor exceptions concentrated in Jiddayil, al-Qurnı̄ is exclusively Greek Orthodox in religion and is completely surrounded, in depth, by Maronite (technically Roman Catholic) villages. In 1921, Kisrawan had a resident population of 41,004, plus an emigrant population of 14,290. Of the residents, 34,395 were Maronites, 2,659 were Mitwaali (Shi'a Muslims), and 1,010 were Greek Orthodox (all figures from Himadeh, 1936, pp. 410–11). Virtually all of the last must have been counted in al-Qurnı̄.

It has not been possible to go very far into this study without encountering the phenomenon of units of loyalty and identification. Since this topic will occupy an increasingly important position as we proceed, nothing more will be said about it at this point, except this: Beyond, and except for, kinship and local connections, sectarian affiliation in the Middle East is the strongest bond which can unite a group of people and the most impenetrable barrier which can separate one group from another.

FROM BEIRUT TO MUNṢIF

Placed in its physical and cultural context, let us now turn to the village of al-Munṣif itself. It might be asked why a community of farmers should settle in such an unfavorable environment in the first place. A tentative answer to this question will be presented in the chapter, "The Patterns of Culture Change." It might also be asked why, once established, such a community should grow greatly in size and continue to function even through periods of great economic difficulty. This is an easy question to ask. The remainder of this work is, essentially, an attempt to answer it.

Let us, now, in imagination, go to Munṣif by automobile from Beirut. The trip will take perhaps an hour and a quarter.

Between Beirut and the mouth of the Dog River the road is lined, for the most part, with banana and citrus plantations, and lush stands of tall reeds. Beyond the river, however, the citrus plantations cease, but the banana plantations continue. We notice that water is brought to them in open cement conduits. On the upper slopes to our right, we pass innumerable small villages and their olive and fig orchards.

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Finally, we come to the town of Jbayl whose population was estimated in 1932 to be 5000, (Himadeh, 1936, p. 9). It is now probably considerably more. It is surrounded by banana plantations and is currently enjoying a period of prosperity and growth largely because of the recently installed irrigation system. The highway runs right through the commercial center of the town, and though we must be careful to avoid collision with heavily laden donkeys, sheep, fowl, men, honking taxis, trucks and buses, we are aware that the street is lined with small shops of all kinds. On our left we pass the local courthouse, a neat modernistic structure from which the national flag flies, and around which stand or sit a few members of the national gendarmerie, in khaki uniforms, with rifles slung over their shoulders. If our eyes are sharp, we will notice also, a small sign which reads "Fouilles de Byblos," with an arrow pointing towards the sea. And in this direction we can hardly fail to miss seeing the cavernous vault which is all that remains of the upper levels of a castle built by the Crusaders. If we have prepared ourselves properly, we will know that this ruin is surrounded by others of much greater age which attest to the fact that the bustle through which we are passing is but the current phase in the life of one of the oldest continuously inhabited sites in the world. Later we will learn that Jbayl is the primary marketing center of Munṣif.

Shortly after leaving Jbayl, we pass the unpaved road which leads to the large village of 'Amshiit built on a small rise in the land at some distance from the highway. We must deduce its identity from our map, for there is, as usual, no sign. After the rather sharp turn near al-Burj, the road dips downward and our view to the north is suddenly blocked completely by the ridge to which some reference has already been made. The ridge appears to plunge, at a moderately steep angle, directly into the sea, but we notice that the highway continues on around it. We, however, turn sharply to the right on a side road which we can see winds up the ridge. We stop, athwart the railroad tracks, to allow a man, whose head is swathed in a *kuffiyah* and crowned by an *agal*, to drive his herd of fat-tailed sheep across the road. He pays no particular attention to us, for he is a stranger here himself, though he has probably come this way for years. However, after we have wound our way upwards for a few minutes we pass a group of men who are lounging in the shade of a carob tree, eating lunch. They stare hard and fixedly at us, and one of them gets to his feet to have a better look. Our major ascent is finished when we reach the crest of the ridge, and we find on each side of the road the neat terraces of figs and olives which belong to Jiddayil. Soon the houses close in tightly, but briefly, on both sides. As we pass through, a rooster flaps across the road, just missing our wheels. A few human figures step out of doorways to see who is coming and stand staring at us. Off to the right of the straight road from Jiddayil to Shaykhan we see smoke pouring from the open top of a limekiln. To the left, still at some distance, we see, at last, the houses of Munṣif, ranging in color from white to tawny to grey. They are perched, seemingly on top

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361 of each other, along the flank of a crest which descends noticeably in the direction
● 487 of the sea whose far horizon rises high in the western sky.

Shaykhan seems deserted as we drive through it, and then go down into Munṣif.
361 At first, olive terraces rise above us on the right and fall away below us on the
609 left, but almost immediately they are replaced by houses. We stop in what appears to be the middle of the village, where an old car is parked and human activity is apparent. In the next half minute or so, a group of small barefooted boys, dressed in shorts, gathers, and they eye us intently as they talk among themselves in low tones. Across the road, an old man in a long striped gown leans on a heavy cane. While he stands looking at us, he is joined by a young man in a sport shirt and neatly pressed European-style trousers. Other figures appear, but no one moves, and everyone keeps his distance. Two women walk close by the car, peering into it as best they can without upsetting the large wicker trays which they carry on their heads. They do not stop, however, and disappear into a windowless building nearby. The loud chatter which has been coming from this building dies down suddenly to a murmur, and more people appear. Their faces seem expressionless except that they manage to convey a feeling of withdrawn, yet unabashed, curiosity. No one steps forward.

As we get out of our car, someone picks up a stone and hurls it at a large dog which has been barking savagely at us. It runs off, yelping. We approach the young man in European clothes and address him haltingly in Arabic, asking the whereabouts of one whose name we have been given. Almost before he has finished his reply, spoken in good English, the one we seek himself appears. We introduce ourselves, and he leads us to his house, elaborately inquiring after our
[574] health. Seated under his roof, we are offered cigarettes and small candies, soon his wife brings us coffee, and we experience for the first time the warm hospitality for which the people of Munṣif are famous.

We have arrived and can begin our study.

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Physical Description of Area.

361 132 134 241 The coastal plain in the Kasmie area is bounded by the Mediterranean Sea on the west and the Lebanon range on the east. The climate is Mediterranean with dry summers, nearly all of the rain falling between October and May. The soil is chiefly a heavy clay. Much of this coastal area is suitable for irrigation. While some of the land is rocky and in the United States would not be used for farm land, nearly all land capable of cultivation has been brought under the plow. The steeper slopes are protected from serious erosion by rock wall terraces. The climate is favorable to the growth of temperate and sub-tropical crops. Citrus fruits, bananas, vegetables, and cereal crops are found in abundance.

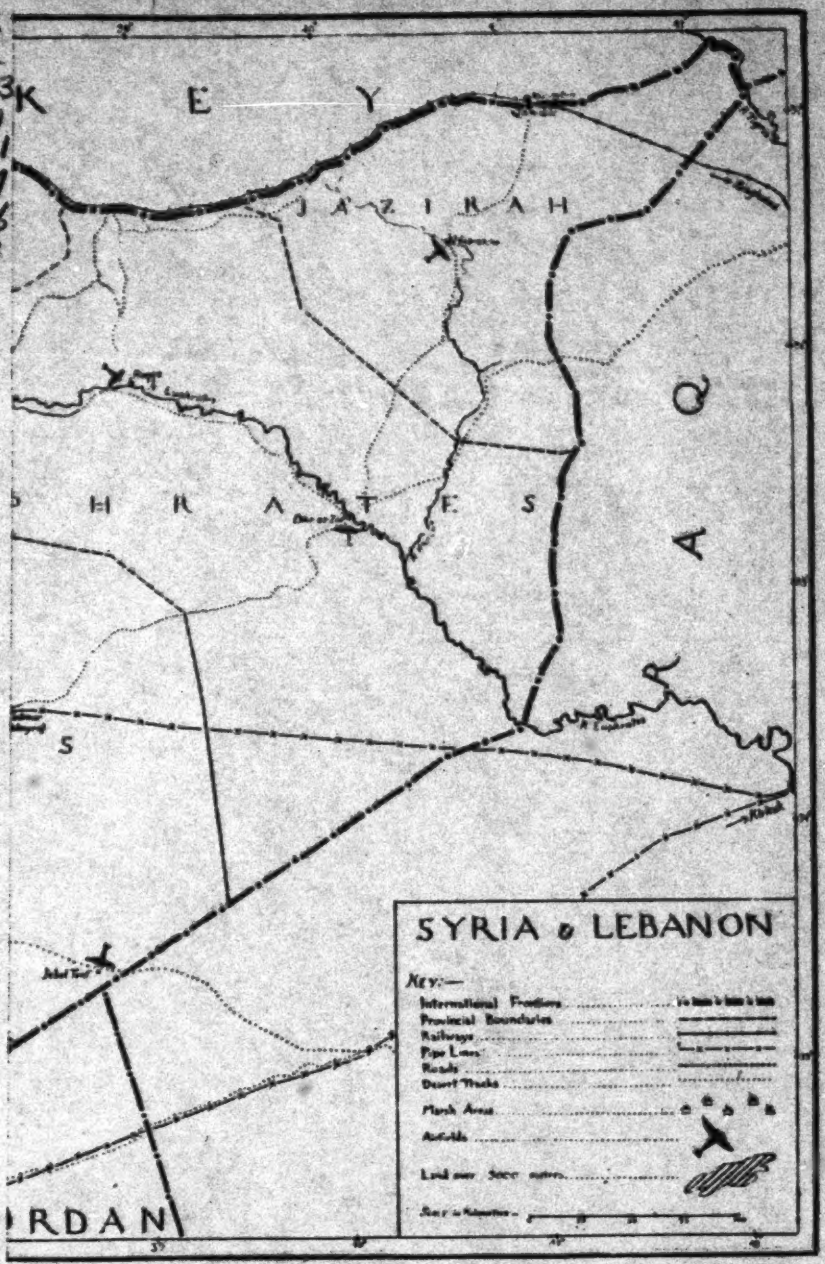
361 491 487 494 The major markets for the products of the five villages are Beirut and Saida. All of the project and control villages are linked to the Tyre-Saida-Beirut main coastal road by gravel surfaced roads except for Loubya and Saksakiyah, which are dependent upon trails. In no case is the dei'ah more than two miles from the main road. The traffic on this road is heavy and trucks and buses are frequently available for taking products to Saida or Beirut. These towns are 12 and 42 miles respectively distant from 'Adloun, the most southerly village.

Village Government.

622 623 471 556 The five villages included in the Kasmie Rural Improvement Project have a similar form of local government. Each village has a mukhtar (mayor) who is elected in a more-or-less democratic manner. In each village there is also a board of aldermen or village elders. This board is also elected to office and it consists of from two to six members. The mukhtar is generally the largest landowner or operator and one of the wealthiest men in the village. The aldermen as well are among the more well-to-do villagers. However, the concept of wealth is relative. Often the holdings owned by local villagers may be large in comparison with others in their own community, but small indeed when compared to the size of holdings in the village controlled by persons living outside the village. The common fellah does not enjoy representation by his peers in this area. whether he has such aspirations is not known.

T U R K
HATAY
A L E P P O
E U P H
HAMA
LATAKIA
H O M S
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
D A M A S C U S
JEBEL DRUZE
TRANSJORDA

END MAP (A)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J A Z I R A H
H R A T E S
A Q
S
RDAN
SYRIA & LEBANON
KEY:—
International Frontiers
Provincial Boundaries
Railways
Pipe Lines
Roads
Desert Tracks
Marsh Areas
Airfields

END MAP (B)